

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 01393 060036Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----062149Z 030358 /63
R 052357Z MAY 77
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3466

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1393

EXDIS

FOR ATHERTON FROM LEONARD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL

1. AT YOUNG'S APRIL 29 RECEPTION FOR ARAB UN PERM REPS
AND YOURSELF, I WAS STRUCK BY SYRIAN AMBASSADOR ALLAF'S
REMARKS ABOUT ISRAEL IN RESPONSE TO YOUR COMMENTS ON THE
NEED TO MOVE AHEAD IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR A SETTLEMENT OF THE
ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. YOU WILL RECALL THAT ALLAF,
SPEAKING IN FRONT OF HIS ARAB COLLEAGUES, SAID IN THE
MOST NATURAL WAY THAT THERE IS NO LONGER ANY QUESTION ABOUT
THE ARAB ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL AND THAT THE PROBLEM NOW
IS TO OBTAIN COMPARABLE ACCEPTANCE FOR THE PALESTINIANS.
THE ISRAELIS HAVE REPEATEDLY SAID THAT THE HEART OF THE
CONFLICT IS PRECISELY THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE ARABS
TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR RIGHT TO EXIST IN THE AREA.

2. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE MIGHT BE AN OPPORTUNITY NOW
TO ENCOURAGE SYRIA TO MAKE THIS KIND OF STATEMENT IN A
PUBLIC FORUM. ONE POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO
RAISE THE MATTER WITH ASSAD IN GENEVA. HE COULD SUGGEST,
FOR INSTANCE, THAT LANGUAGE VERY SIMILAR TO THAT USED BY
ALLAF COULD BE INCORPORATED IN A COMMUNIQUE AT THE CON-
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CLUSION OF THE TALKS OR THAT ASSAD COULD SAY SOMETHING ON
THESE LINES TO THE PRESS. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY
WHICH WE MIGHT WANT TO EXPLORE LATER ON IS THE INCLUSION OF
SUCH STATEMENTS IN THE SPEECHES OF ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS
AT THE 32ND UNGA.

3. THIS KIND OF PUBLIC STATEMENT, PARTICULARLY FROM ASSAD

OR ANOTHER SENIOR SYRIAN LEADER, WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT
IMPACT ON ISRAELI PUBLIC OPINION AND COULD CONTRIBUTE TO
CREATING A BETTER ATMOSPHERE FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF
NEGOTIATIONS.

4. INCIDENTALLY, MEGUID TELLS ME THAT ALLAF WAS ONE OF
THE WARMEST AMONG THE NUMEROUS ARAB AMBASSADORS WHO HAVE
BEEN EXPRESSING TO EACH OTHER AS WELL AS TO US THEIR
WARM APPRECIATION FOR THE NEW SPIRIT LYING BEHIND THE
RECEPTION, YOUR REMARKS, AND US POLICY GENERALLY.
LEONARD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977USUNN01393
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770160-0352
Format: TEL
From: USUN NEW YORK
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770588/aaaacxxf.tel
Line Count: 73
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b9d08a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2622890
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, PDIP, US, SY, IS, (VANCE, CYRUS R), (ALLAF, MOWAFFAK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b9d08a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009